

NEWS RELEASE

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Wildfires Cause Hardships to Homeowners and Communities

Alamogordo, NM (April 10, 2006) - Conditions this year are particularly ripe for wildfires, especially in communities adjacent to National Forest Lands. Southeastern New Mexico has received very little of its normal precipitation this winter, resulting in 10-12 weeks of extreme wildfire danger.

The Lincoln National Forest made a request for a national wildfire prevention and education team for the southeastern New Mexico area due to the severe fire conditions this spring. The three-to-six member teams will be on Forest until early July. The mission of the wildfire prevention teams is to assist the Forest and other local agencies and groups with wildfire prevention messages.

Fire prevention starts with individuals taking action now to remove vegetation that threatens their homes. Such prompt action will help make their homes and communities safer.

Wildland wildfire education can help prevent the catastrophic wildfires the western United States has been experiencing. In southeastern New Mexico, most wildfires are caused by smoking, campfires, ATVs and industrial activities, such as welding.

Homeowners can increase their chances of avoiding a disastrous wildfire by planning ahead. Private landowners only need to take a few simple steps to protect their property from wildfire, such as removing vegetation from around their homes and storing fuels in an area 30 feet away from the residence.

For information on how to protect your home against wildfires, go to www.firewise.org.

Residents are urged to leave nothing to chance this spring!

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